



Joel Scholten, MD

Growing up on a farm in South Dakota, where everyone pitches in to help their neighbors, taught Joel Scholten the importance of community, hard work and team work at a very early age.

In his position as the Associate Chief of Staff, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service, Dr. Scholten uses this team approach to provide clinical care in the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Polytrauma Clinics at the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

For the past 16 years, he has been working closely with Veterans to develop plans to help them live as independently as possible. “I feel very strongly that utilizing community engagement in rehabilitation planning is essential to maximizing independence and quality of life,” said Dr. Scholten. He believes fostering community reintegration is especially important for service members returning from deployment.

He may be far from the rural farms of South Dakota, but is still no stranger to hard work. Besides his clinical work at the medical center, Dr. Scholten also serves as the National Director of Special Projects for the VA Central Office’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Program.

Dr. Scholten is an associate clinical professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine. He is also the clinical coordinator of the VA’s Polytrauma/Blast Related Injury QUERI.

He also serves as the Director of the Polytrauma Research Fellowship for doctoral-level physical therapists and serves on a number of national VA committees including the Post Deployment

Interdisciplinary Clinical Initiative - Technical Advisory Team, the National Pain Committee, and the TBI Screening and Evaluation Committee.